

Juneteenth 2023: Where Woke refuses to die!

By the League Revolutionary Education collective

The most reactionary ruling class forces in the United States have launched a massive attack on the reality of the Black experience in America. Black history is American history -- and the denial and falsification of Black history is the denial and falsification of the history of America and the reality of America's multiracial working class. Today's political, cultural, and legal attacks on wokeness and Critical Race Theory (CRT) -- the censorship of curricula from K-12 through college and graduate school, book banning in schools and libraries, fake news and lies -- are ruling class tools in the intensifying motion toward fascism. Truth and knowledge, science and history are powerful weapons in our collective revolutionary arsenal. Juneteenth offers important lessons that inform our path to power.

Juneteenth is a celebration of freedom by Black folks who were stolen from their homelands and exploited as chattel slave labor to fuel capitalism's rapacious drive for maximum profit. For centuries, the dehumanization of African peoples and the creation of the slavocracy in the Americas was central for establishing the United States as a world power and for the global expansion of capitalism. W.E.B. Du Bois wrote:

"Black labor became the foundation stone



JOHN PARTIPILO / TENNESSEE LOOKOUT

not only of the Southern social structure, but of Northern manufacture and commerce, of the English factory system, of European commerce, of buying and selling on a world-wide scale; new cities were built on the results of black labor..."

The legacy of Juneteenth develops out of the transition in the United States from a

capitalist system based largely on *slave* labor to the capitalist *wage* labor system. The Black freedom struggle in America precedes the Civil War, but erupts during this period of intense instability. The Civil War was a political war between sections of the ruling class to determine which form of capitalism would be dominant in America -- *industry* fu-

eled by wage labor in the North or *agriculture* driven by slave labor in the South.

President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. This news did not reach many enslaved Africans until two years later, when the Union army announced the freedom of more than 250,000 Africans in formerly Confederate held territory, Galveston Bay, Texas. On June 19, 1865, African Americans were now free from chattel slavery, marking our actual independence day -- known as Juneteenth: Black Independence Day.

REALITY CHECK

The Emancipation Proclamation reads: "[A]ll persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, henceforward, and forever free." It was a strategic political move to preserve the Union. While the Emancipation Proclamation freed *some* enslaved Africans, it was not a purely "benevolent" act. In 1862 Lincoln had written:

"My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. *If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would*

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A new mayor and new politics in Chicago

Revolutionaries using the electoral arena to advance the battle for basic needs have entered a new era in Chicago. On April 4, 2023 voters elected Brandon Johnson as mayor. They rejected Paul Vallas and his version of guaranteeing "public safety." Vallas, endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police, vowed to keep Chicago safe by hiring more police. Johnson, redefining public safety, argued that increased police budgets had never made the city safer. Decades-long disinvestment in working-class communities had condemned residents to a precarious existence. A majority of voters agreed with Johnson.

Along with Johnson, the voters elected new Chicago City Council members to join the caucus that champions progressive causes. Lakefront wards north of downtown -- among the most diverse in Chicago -- returned incumbent progressives to the City Council, elected progressives to replace machine democrats, and voted solidly for Johnson. A movement fighting gentrification and for affordable housing spearheaded these battles. The question facing the movement in Chicago is: Will the ground apparatus, which won the electoral victory, continue now that the voting

is done?

A MOVEMENT, NOT A MOMENT

Chicago has a history of movements for transformation. The movement for the eight-hour day, centered in Chicago in 1886, gave us May Day. A century later, a deindustrialization crisis hit the rust belt and devastated Chicago. The growth of labor-replacing technology transformed what was once the center of manufacturing in the world into an economy based on speculation and cast Chicago's workers into a dispossessed class unable to survive. In this environment, a long history of political movement among Black workers in Chicago culminated in the election of Mayor Harold Washington in 1983.

In the following three decades, Chicago fully entered into the era of financial and real estate speculation. Schools were closed, mental health clinics shuttered, tent cities proliferated, and affordable housing (including public housing) shriveled up. Living-wage jobs became a dream, not a reality. While police accountability and public safety were the key talking points in this election, ending poverty was the backdrop and the foundation

for Brandon Johnson's platform during the campaign.

Police repression runs throughout this advancing economic destruction. The 1969 assassination of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark galvanized the hatred of the Chicago Police Department (CPD). The Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression toiled for decades for community control of police, as year after year police disregard for the community became more palpable.

Organizing among young people especially took on an abolitionist character, inspired by the work of Mariame Kaba and others. In May 2014 the police killed Dominique "Damo" Franklin. That catalyzed the formation of "We Charge Genocide," and led to a petition to the United Nations Commission on Torture. In October 2014, only five months after Damo was murdered, another police assassin, officer Jason Van Dyke, fired 16 shots into the body of Laquan McDonald. Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez covered the shooting up by delaying the release of the video of the shooting for a year, well after the 2015 city

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Ukraine war is really an attack on the working class

In the first quarter of the 21st century, the U.S. government is embroiled in another large-scale military conflict that the American people are funding. Ukraine is being destroyed and thousands of Ukrainians and Russians are dying because leaders in the United States are determined to destroy or weaken Russia, as a step to attacking China, even risking the threat of nuclear war in the process.

Ukraine was long a strategic country in NATO's eastward expansion toward Russia under U.S. auspices. Conflict escalated over the last two decades with the most consequential turn being the U.S.-backed Maidan coup of 2014, that used as its strike force the fascist right-wing militias which ousted Ukraine's elected leader Viktor Yanukovich.

Of the more than \$27 billion sent to Ukraine by the United States since then, \$24 billion of it has been spent since February 2022. Deaths from both sides are estimated at around 200,000. The United States is spending billions on weaponry that Ukrainian forces need months of training to master. Prolonging this conflict brings human and ecological devastation. Britain for example, is sending depleted uranium shells to the battlefield that would destroy Ukraine's agricultural sector which exports over 10% of the planet's grain.

During the early years of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Bush administration had made unprecedented deep tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans instead of raising taxes to offset the cost of wartime

spending. Those costs will be paid for by future generations and the strain is palpable. Meanwhile, Congress cannot find money to ensure housing, healthcare, education, safe roads and bridges, or even secure food and clean water for everyone in this country.

CRISIS AFTER CRISIS IN CAPITALISM

We have to question why the war is being fought. Difficult as it can be to unravel the complex historical events that led to war in Ukraine we can grasp the fundamental contradiction that underlies it. Far more money is going into fueling a conflict that is destroying yet another country through force than is being used to address the crises we face where we live. It is for this reason that war must be regarded as an attack on the working class, both at home and abroad.

The United States has been hit with two catastrophes in the last two decades. In 2008, irresponsible lending brought on financial collapse. A global pandemic that killed over a million people in the United States also threw millions out of work and turned millions out of house and home. Both events exposed capitalism's crisis-prone cycle and its inability to meet the needs of people in a time of crisis. The train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio which resulted in tanker cars spilling a variety of toxic chemicals like vinyl chloride should have resulted in emergency reaction. This, after the railroad lobbied against federal safety mandates that could have prevented this and more recent tragedies. Crisis after crisis points to a society whose leadership has its priorities in the extraction of wealth and the expansion of political power around the world.

The Ukraine conflict brought to light the increasingly aggressive stance of the United States toward Russia and China. The provocative role of the United States has strengthened the coalition of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) and other regional organizations. More countries are making moves to develop alternate currencies and payment systems not tied to the dollar. The prospect of an alternative to the U.S. dominated world order is a threat to the U.S. ruling capitalist class.

The war has not benefited the working class in any way. The sanctions regime orchestrated to wreck Russia's economy proved short-sighted, leaving Germany and much of Europe without a source of cheap energy and increasing the cost of living in the United States. Consumers and workers are feeling the pinch at the pump and at the supermarket.

HUMAN AND ECOLOGICAL COSTS OF WAR

What does this mean in terms of human and ecological costs of war?

We are a country in trauma: opioid crisis and mass shootings, homelessness, hunger. Our ruling class and its foreign policy are not in the interests of the working class in the United States or the world. Each escalation of this war brings us closer to the threat of nuclear annihilation than we have ever been.

We, the people of the United States, cannot tolerate our "leaders" pouring money into destruction abroad while claiming there is not enough money to provide basic human needs at home. The struggle for needs and rights here can become a struggle for peace – a struggle to stay the hand of our war-mak-

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On an abandoned city street, a woman in despair sits near a sign reading 'Stop war in Ukraine.'
iSTOCK, DRAZEN ZIGIC

EDITORIAL POLICY

Rally! to bring back together and put in a state of order, as retreating troops [to return to attack].

Rally! is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. In this period of growing motion and developing polarization, *Rally!* provides a strategic outlook for the revolutionaries by indicating and illuminating the line of march of the revolutionary process. It presents a pole of scientific clarity, examines and analyzes the real problems of the revolutionary movement, and draws political conclusions for the tasks of revolutionaries at each stage of development in order to prepare for future stages. It is a vehicle to reach out to and communicate with revolutionaries both within the League and outside of the League, to engage them in debate and discussion, and to provide a forum for these discussions. Articles represent the position and policies of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

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League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Today, whether through words or deeds, vast numbers of socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries in opposition to the degenerating social and economic conditions. The League's mission is to unite with other revolutionaries around the demands of the working class, especially the class of displaced workers, and show how the solution is a cooperative, communist society, where social wealth is owned in common and distributed according to need.

The demands of this new impoverished class for food, housing, education, healthcare and an opportunity to contribute to society are summed up as the demand for a cooperative society. Such a society must be based on the public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of the social product according to need.

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Our class is coming together to fight for a new world

From the Editors

The battle is growing between the vast majority of people and a small ruling class that owns and therefore controls most of the world. In 2011, Occupy Wall Street spotlighted the fact that the wealthiest 1% of people and the corporations they own make decisions that often harm the rest of us – the 99%.

Today, more members of the 99% are coming together than ever. This exploded with the George Floyd Rebellion in the summer of 2020; record voter turnout to defeat Trump's bid for re-election; mobilizations against the Supreme Court's stripping away a woman's right to choose; the election of an African American teachers' union activist as Chicago's newest mayor; increased demon-

strations to protect children from guns and the battle against a militarized police training center in an Atlanta forest that activists call Cop City.

Although battles are being joined, the war is far from won and a 21st century American fascism is rising to crush the movements of our class. This ruling class does not intend to allow us to make the changes needed to solve our problems. Instead, they are imposing dangerous measures to control us: dehumanization of the unhoused; the Trump-led attempted coup of January 6, 2021; increased criminalization of protest, including the recent police murder of a forest defender and the detaining of 35 others for "domestic terrorism" at Cop City, and the Tennessee legislature's expulsion of elected representatives for participating in a peaceful protest to end mass shootings.

To win, the movements of the 99% will need to come together politically to push for the common solution to their problems, which can all be traced to the capitalist system (and the white supremacy that it rests on).

We are beginning to see the growth of this necessity coming together. We see a fusion of movements for housing and against police violence in defense against city sweeps of unhoused communities. The recent strike of University of California graduate students reflected the merging of the demand for affordable housing, for labor rights and for access to public education. The mobilization against Cop City brings together movements for environmental justice, civil rights and police abolition.

Atlanta community activist Keana Jones said, "None of our issues stand alone. ... We don't want Cop City."

Activists trying to prevent the construction of Cop City are on the front lines of the battle for the future of humanity and all living things.

Occupy Wall Street stated, "We are the 99% and we have moved to reclaim our mortgaged future."

Class consciousness must be developed more broadly for the 99%, the working class, to get the political power to play its historic role. The most important task of revolutionaries today is to spread the consciousness of our common problems, the cause of the problems in the capitalist private property system, and the solution of a publicly owned and governed cooperative society. Revolutionaries from all corners must educate, organize and come together to obtain the political power needed to reorganize society in the interests of humanity and the Earth. **R**

In Chicago, a new mayor and a new politics on the rise

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election. "Sixteen shots and a cover-up" expressed the rage that convulsed Chicago.

Forces working for a police review apparatus and "We Charge Genocide," now with much broader reach, began a campaign to dump Álvarez. The "Bye Anita" campaign seized on supporting Kim Foxx as a progressive alternative, although the core of the "Bye Anita" campaign was convinced that the State's Attorney's office itself was as much a problem.

In 2015, two candidates won City Council seats in races that were carefully watched. In one, Carlos Ramirez-Rosa espoused a Democratic Socialist agenda openly. In the other, Susan Sadlowski Garza leaned on her work as a union teacher and her family's historic legacy in the steelworkers union. When this was capped in 2016 by the wildly successful "Bye Anita" campaign, new forces had announced their arrival in Chicago. In 2019, the grassroots organizations tripled the number of council members committed to a fight for basic needs. In 2023, the number increased again. In the mayoral race, the majority in Chicago showed they distrusted the police to preserve public safety, since calling the police too often resulted in murder of unarmed young people.

Election successes are neither strictly nor solely the result of an electoral movement. In 1983, Harold Washington declared about his own victory: "It's not the man, it's the plan." The plan in 2023: a gathering movement for survival in all its elements. At the beginning of the campaign, few voters recognized Johnson's name. Even after the February 28 election, it seemed Johnson had an insurmountable deficit to make up in the runoff. Some leading Democrats rushed to endorse his opponent. They underestimated the strength of the movement and its commitment to "the plan." Many of the same forces that had mobilized around "Bye Anita" and the police review process came

forward to mobilize for Johnson. The youth vote (under 35) had the greatest percentage increase. Older voters (over 55) actually declined in percentage. Echoing the voices from the Harold Washington era, a citywide network of Artists for Brandon published a manifesto supporting the cultural program of the Johnson campaign and distributed art work widely through social media.

Progressive City Council members fought the remnants of the Democratic Party machine, running against nearly all incumbent progressives. The progressives rode the wave of the movement for survival. The machine lost because they lacked any credibility of meeting the people's demands.

NEXT STEPS

The vultures counterattacked against the mayor-elect even before he took office on May 15. They assailed the composition of his transition team as not representing business as well as his refusal to respond to street violence by demonizing youth. This hostility reflects the objective crisis in Chicago. All the issues for which our class is fighting are connected and must be liberated from the yoke of corporate domination.

As the Brandon Johnson administration takes shape, progressives will play a larger role in organizing the governance of the city. This will test the limitations of their power. Nothing will move forward in the city, indeed the entire country, until a broad motion supports the fight for making private property public. The "Bring Chicago Home" transfer tax on high-end real estate sales is a start to curb private property in housing.

Some ward organizations created in the process of the 2019 election were strengthened during the early months of the pandemic in 2020. New forces rose to the new threats of the public health emergency. Mutual aid efforts undercut the capitalist-imposed economic insecurity. A new form of political organization is needed that is outside the con-



RIGHT: Winning mayoral candidate Brandon Johnson with Stacy Davis Gates, president of the Chicago Teachers Union. **BOTTOM:** Defeated candidate Paul Vallas, who was backed by corporate money and the police union.

Collage: Chicago Digital Media Task Force

rol of the Democratic Party and that carries out the practical fight for the survival of the residents – moving the houseless into apartments, preventing evictions, carrying out public health checks – all activities alien

to the traditional electoral political apparatus. Elements of this are falling into place.

This election need not herald a momentary victory. Let's make this a movement for transformation. **R**

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Housing is the only real solution for the houseless

All across America, brutal encampment sweeps are tossing tents, blankets, and other belongings into trash compactors, and dispersing people into atmospheric rivers – or blizzards – with only the clothes on their backs. The “Housing First” strategy for ending homelessness, which has been adopted by virtually every government agency at every level for over 20 years, is under attack.

Housing First provides permanent housing for formerly unhoused people at a rent of 30% of their income. Unhoused people and supporters have always advocated for housing like this as the commonsense solution to homelessness, ever since mass homelessness exploded in the 1980s. Band-aids like the shelter system only recycled unhoused people back and forth between programs and the streets. By 2000, it was no longer possible to pretend that band-aid solutions were working. Housing First was adopted by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, supported by a bipartisan majority in Congress, and became a required strategy for every agency receiving HUD funding.

Housing First was a success from the standpoint of social work practitioners and individual unhoused persons. When they moved into affordable housing, as opposed to shelter programs, they had measurably



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much better outcomes. However, the low-income housing necessary to make it really work was not available. Since modern digital production needed fewer workers, government simply stopped ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing. Where low-income housing did exist, or get built, it was often segregated, shoddy, lacked services, and sometimes crime-ridden.

CRIMINALIZATION

So when homelessness continued to increase in the 2010s, the ruling class confronted a dilemma: either build the housing needed, or else make excuses to abandon Housing First, blame the unhoused themselves, and criminalize them. Since the economy cannot build low-income housing without massive government subsidies, the ruling class is deciding to reject Housing First and moving more and more toward sweeps and incarceration.

The tendency to outlaw unhoused people has always been present, but the refusal to try other approaches is bringing it to the forefront. Donald Trump set out to conduct massive sweeps of unhoused people in major cities, before he got diverted by the pandemic. He appointed Robert Marbut, a notorious

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Michigan to Mississippi, corporate power drives water crisis

Submitted by the Water Committee of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Residents of Flint, Michigan were disappointed last December, but not surprised, when Genesee County Judge F. Kay Behm gave former Michigan governor Rick Snyder and others the Christmas gift of dropping all criminal charges over their role in the 2014 poisoning of Flint’s water system. This ruling telegraphed a message: taking over a city’s public water assets will go unpunished even when it results in poisoning an entire city, causing irreparable harm and even death.

With Snyder’s approval, the emergen-

cy manager who controlled Flint’s finances, switched its publicly owned water supply from Detroit to the Flint River, bringing lead poisoning to city residents. (See the Rally article *Flint is Still Broken, Six Years Later.*) They claimed this switch was needed because Flint’s aging system was costing the public too much, so a new pipeline had to be built.

But water rates stayed high after the system was switched, and remained high after the disaster, when they restored water from Detroit. Why should a town that’s in the middle of the Great Lakes – largest water reservoir in the world – have among the highest

water rates in the country? Because 60 percent of every dollar people pay goes for the pipeline bond debt owed to JPMorgan Chase & Co., Wells Fargo, and Stifel, Nicolaus & Co.

Judge Behm issued the ruling freeing Snyder and others of any criminal responsibility shortly before becoming a federal judge in late December. Fadwa Hammoud, a lead attorney on the state’s criminal prosecution team, was later appointed deputy Michigan attorney general. How did these people get promoted when they failed to protect Flint residents? The answer seems to be that they

protected corporate interests instead.

Near Flint, the Benton Harbor water system is running at a deficit, and on March 6 consultant John Young told city commissioners the city needs Michigan’s government to rescue it with \$2.5 million a year over 10 years. But Mayor Marcus Muhammad insisted this was not just a handout. “We want justice. Because what was done to Benton Harbor through the emergency management was a grave injustice because of the monies that were taken away.”

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Juneteenth 2023, where Woke refuses to die!

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do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. *What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union.*”

The Reconstruction era that followed the Union victory in the Civil War was short-lived and ended with the Compromise of 1877. Almost immediately the Ku Klux Klan – founded in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1865 – and other violent paramilitary white supremacist groups formed to terrorize freed Blacks and white folks who supported abolition and Reconstruction governments. By the 1890s, Jim Crow constitutions and Black Codes were

in place throughout the South along with violence, lynchings, widespread terror and destruction. Jim Crow rule legally ended with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 – but it never ended as a *de facto* reality. The reforms of the 1960s and 1970s have been eviscerated. State violence, repressive laws, extralegal terror, lies and false narratives – hallmarks of fascist rule – are again on the rise.

REVOLUTIONARY AWAKENING: THE RISE OF WOKE CONSCIOUSNESS

The specter of white supremacy looming over the world is manifest in the culture and

practice of the U.S. ruling class across the centuries and is congealed into the capitalist socioeconomic and political system that haunts us today. Although white supremacy seems as intangible as a spirit, its presence as an ideology is alive and bound to the body of capitalism.

In the 21st century, people around the globe are impacted by the many crises of capitalism – poverty, houselessness, famine, deepening exploitation, ecocide, racial and gender violence, intensifying fascism, and war. The global COVID pandemic exacerbated existing polarizations. The poor are getting poorer precisely because the rich are

getting richer. In the United States, because of racial apartheid and discrimination, Black folks, in particular, and other oppressed peoples are disproportionately dispossessed and disposable.

Digital technology is the force driving shifts in the economy and society. This technology helps create the abundance to meet humanity’s needs and to heal the metabolic rift between humanity and nature. Digitization, automation, robotics and artificial intelligence make it possible to feed, house, and clothe the masses of people. But

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Michigan to Mississippi, corporate power drives water crisis

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WATER STRUGGLES REFLECT FASCIST MODEL

The 2016 Rally article called *What Happens in Michigan Won't Stay in Michigan* warned readers that “corporate private property has secured a fascist political model to carry out its aims. Democracy as we know it has become a liability.” Attacks on public water systems across the country are verifying the truth of this danger.

In Jackson, Mississippi a state senate bill was introduced this January to create a new Regional Water Authority board that would “oversee” Jackson’s sewage and drainage systems. (The bill passed the state Senate in February and was sent to the state House, where on March 8 it died in committee.) This came on the heels of a \$600 million allocation from Congress for Jackson’s water system. The bill’s backers claim that local elected officials in this majority African American city may not be “capable of managing its own affairs.” That accusation comes straight out of the playbook developed under Michigan’s Emergency Manager law, used to impose state takeovers of majority African American cities.

The Mississippi governor and state legislature’s plan for “regionalization” masks the outright takeover of Jackson’s water system and is best described by Mayor Chokwe Lumumba as “a colonial power taking over our city. It is plantation politics.” He adds that “It reminds me of apartheid. ... They dictate our leadership, put a military force over us and we’re just supposed to pay taxes to the king.”

Meanwhile, out west, 40 million people in seven states use the Colorado River for drinking water, for agriculture and for hydroelectric power. Climate change and the resultant water scarcity led to a federal mandate that a conservation plan be established, and while the debate over which states have access to what amounts of water ensues, Wall Street investors are swooping in.

Water Asset Management, LLC, a Madison Avenue hedge fund, has snapped up at least \$20 million worth of land in western Colorado and is now one of the largest landowners in the Grand Valley. Company president Matthew Diserio has admitted that his firm’s strategy is to “profit from the water” by selling parts of its water rights to other farmers and cities desperate for them.

According to Andrew Mueller, general manager of the Colorado River Water Conservation District, “I view these drought profiteers as vultures. ... They’re looking to make a lot of money off this public resource. Water in Colorado, water in the west, is your future. Without water, you have no future.”

ECONOMIC CRISIS WORSENS WATER CRISIS

In Jackson, Mississippi, Fox News report-



Pixaby

ed on January 29 that “Jackson’s longstanding water issue has caused years of economic decline.” But people should realize that the economic crisis in Jackson and across America preceded today’s unfolding national water crisis. These water disasters only make an already bad situation for the working class even worse.

But the spread of corporate fascism is being met with a growing unity of action among workers. In Michigan, a broad movement won overwhelming support of the public, and finally got the state to overturn its emergency manager law, only to have the Snyder regime tweak and reinstate it. In February, State Representative Brenda Carter introduced a bill to repeal the emergency manager law completely, calling it “a terrible idea that opened the door to the discrimination and decimation of low-income, primarily Black communities.”

Organizers are pushing city after city to pass resolutions in support of the bill, as did Flint. When urging their council to pass it, water warrior Claire McClinton told the Flint city council: “This resolution represents a pushback on a long, treacherous and unpleasant experience of emergency management in Flint.” She added: “The emergency manager law is what set [the water crisis] in motion.”

Flint, Jackson, Mississippi and Colorado have a connection. Capitalist interests, especially Wall Street financial corporations, are on a mission to seize water assets. We urge all environmental justice advocates, water warriors to join together, support each other, reclaim stewardship, turn up the heat against the theft of what they see as “the new oil” – our WATER. That’s a step toward understanding that we need a complete reorganization of society that takes control out of hands of corporations, and uses society’s wealth to provide for people’s needs. **R**

Housing is the only real solution for the houseless

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advocate of punishing the poor, to serve as Director of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness. Manhattan Institute propagandist Christopher Rufo (who also invented the anti-“Critical Race Theory” campaign) wrote a book arguing that providing housing failed to create a “disincentive to the problematic behavior associated with street homelessness.” Mass sweeps and encampment ban policies began spreading widely in cities like New York, Los Angeles and Sacramento.

RESISTANCE

The result has been an upsurge in resistance. Encampments in cities all across the country are starting to organize into self-governing communities. Advocacy groups like L.A. Community Action Network, led by the unhoused and formerly unhoused, are expanding. Youth influenced by the 2020 George Floyd rebellion are organizing sweeps-resistance networks like Services Not Sweeps in L.A. And unhoused people and their supporters are electing pro-housing and abolitionist candidates to local government leadership.

One example of the new communities arising is the Wood Street Commons in Oakland, California, which is currently battling against eviction by city government officials. “The Wood Street community is a hub of resilience, organized to provide for each other,” write its leaders. “Residents benefit from a greater sense of safety and a better chance of recovering from addiction and healing from trauma than in the cramped and neglectful city intervention sites. Wood Street is a haven for artists and builders to explore creative ways to house people and construct beautiful common spaces through sustainable infrastructure like solar power, composting, and gardening.”

The crisis has unleashed a bitter war of ideas. The ruling class, led by its real estate-financial sector, is claiming that homelessness is not a systemic housing issue, but one of bad people – people who are either mentally ill and need to be locked up in institutions, or who are criminal and need to be incarcerated. In any case, they all need to be removed from public spaces. Although they do not openly admit it, their favored solution is ultimately some kind of internment camps in remote areas like those where the Japanese Americans were sent in World War II.

In fact, homelessness is caused by the documented shortage of over 7 million low-income housing units. According to a 2020 report by the U.S. Government Accountability

Office, every \$100 increase in median rent tends to be followed by a 9 percent increase in the estimated homelessness rate. The ruling class also tries to present homelessness as a racial problem. What race is “causing” it depends on to whom they are talking. To whites and Latinos, they blame Blacks and to whites and Blacks they blame Latino immigrants.

REAL SOLUTIONS

The actual composition of the unhoused population proves that, while African Americans and Latinos are especially vulnerable due to historic redlining and discrimination, homelessness is nevertheless a class problem that impacts everyone who doesn’t have enough money to pay rent.

Above all, homelessness proves the systemic failure of the existing housing industry as a whole, and the private property economic system that controls it. Because it is based on land, housing and land ownership essentially constitute a monopoly. As Mark Twain once said: “Buy land, they’re not making it anymore.” Housing developers will only build when rents go up.

When supply causes rents to temporarily decline, or even level off, they simply stop building. Banks stop investing. Housing production comes to a halt until the housing shortage gets so much worse that rents start rising again. It is a never-ending cycle that could only be interrupted with massive government investment – which the current government will never allow because it is controlled by the same bankers and landowners that benefit from the status quo. To meet the needs of the people, housing (like all basic needs) should be decommodified on a massive scale and offered to all at affordable rates as a human right (that means households paying no more than 30% of their income).

Revolutionaries are working within the encampments, organizations, and cooperatives on the ground. Our role is to help them mold themselves alongside the other members of their dispossessed class, into a politically unified force ultimately capable of taking the government away from the corporations and turning it over to the people. It means fighting Municipal Ordinance 41.18 in Los Angeles, and the sweeps by Mayor Eric Adams in New York. Collectives of revolutionaries already exist in this movement in every city and community. The way forward is to weave together these networks and build the power necessary to defeat criminalization and distribute basic necessities on the basis of human needs instead of private profit. **R**

Join the Discussion!

Rally! articles offer revolutionaries a fresh perspective! They offer analysis and vision, and outline a strategy to achieve that vision. Share them with your friends and other revolutionaries, get together and talk about the ideas. Spread the vision of a new world and the possibility of achieving it. Join us!

Inside: What new revolutionary times look like!

CHICAGO 2023: THIS ELECTION IS DIFFERENT

In April, Chicago elected Brandon Johnson as mayor, defeating billionaire-backed Paul Vallas who focused his campaign on more funding for police as a solution for poverty, homelessness and school closures. Johnson's political program represents the city's long-standing fight for basic needs and a broad concept of public safety. This victory mirrors the Harold Washington victory. But Today, Chicago is experiencing an economic crisis profoundly different from that in 1983. Chicago's "Democratic machine is split on the economic fault lines," say the authors, and it "wants to suppress the kind of potential independent motion that emerged around Harold Washington's candidacy. The organizations of this dispossessed class are learning who are their friends and who are their enemies." Brandon Johnson's election "can

galvanize a united movement to fight for a program that can take workers one step closer to a society where all can thrive."

HOUSING IS THE ANSWER TO HOMELESSNESS

Today, the "Housing First" strategy for ending homelessness, adopted at every level of government for more than 20 years, is under attack. The ruling class is claiming that homelessness can only be solved by criminalization. Unhoused people and their supporters are electing candidates. Advocacy groups are expanding. Encampments across the country like Wood Street leaders in Oakland, California, offer "a hub of resilience" against eviction by the city. "The way forward," say authors, "is to weave together these networks and build the power necessary to defeat criminalization and distribute basic necessities on the basis of human needs instead of private profit."

FROM MICHIGAN TO MISSISSIPPI TO COLORADO: CORPORATE POWER DRIVES NATIONAL WATER CRISIS

Residents of Flint, Michigan have been fighting against the poisoning of their water and against a local emergency manager system since 2014. Residents pay among the highest water rates in the country. "Capitalist interests, especially Wall Street financial corporations, are on a mission to seize water assets," say authors. In Jackson, Mississippi this January, a state senate bill tried to create a new Regional Water Authority board that would oversee Jackson's sewage and drainage systems. "Meanwhile," say authors, "a hedge fund, has snapped up at least \$20 million worth of land in western Colorado. Authors urge environmental justice advocates to join urban water warriors in turning up the heat against the theft of "the new oil": our water.

UKRAINE WAR AN ATTACK ON THE WORKING CLASS

While the war in Ukraine is destroying lives in Ukraine and Russia, the leaders in the United States are indirectly taking part in the conflict and risking a world-wide nuclear war in doing so. Meanwhile, Americans are increasingly aware the war does not benefit the working class. American cities like Flint, Baltimore and Jackson do not have clean, safe water and the decaying infrastructure problems in the United States could be fixed with the cost of a single day's operations at the Pentagon. Past appeals of military service, including steady employment and good benefits are seen in the context that nearly a quarter of active duty enlisted military personnel are experiencing food insecurity today. They conclude by calling to "Make every struggle for human needs and rights a struggle for peace."

JUNETEENTH 2023: WHERE WOKE REFUSES TO DIE!

Juneteenth, Black Independence Day, is a celebration of freedom from chattel slavery in the United States. President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 but in Texas the news did not reach many enslaved Africans until two years later. In reality, the fight for freedom continues. "Although white supremacy seems as intangible as a spirit, its presence as an ideology is alive and bound to the body of capitalism." Revolutionaries know that in this case, to evict the spirit requires killing the body. "For white supremacy to end," say the authors, "capitalism must die." Woke comes out of the Black experience confronting racial oppression and state violence. Many workers, and oppressed people are now becoming what is described as woke and are moving from critical race consciousness to class consciousness. Revolutionaries must "rally to create a future that is both necessary and possible."

FROM THE EDITORS: OUR CLASS IS COMING TOGETHER TO FIGHT FOR A NEW WORLD

As the working-class struggle grows, 21st century American fascism is rising to crush the movements of our class. In 2011, Occupy Wall Street spotlighted the fact that the wealthiest 1% of people – and the corporations they own – make decisions that often harm the rest of us. From the George Floyd Rebellion in the summer of 2020, to the forest defenders and the expulsion of two of the three Tennessee legislators who participated in a peaceful protest to end mass shootings, more members of the 99% are coming together than ever. ■

Juneteenth 2023, where Woke refuses to die!

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capitalism denies the global majority these necessities of life. Why? New technologies are not used to protect the planet or to ensure the wellbeing of humans and of all life. Rather, they are used to protect capitalist wealth and private property and to reproduce white supremacy, the ideology that maintains it.

However, a problem is arising for the ruling class. As conditions deteriorate, pauperizing and even killing huge swathes of working-class people -- our critical consciousness once laid dormant is being awakened. Black folks, other oppressed peoples and genders, and many workers, who for a time had been pacified into bourgeois induced sleep, hypnotized by the "American Dream," are now becoming what is described as "woke."

Historically, woke comes out of the Black experience confronting racial oppression and state violence. Today, we are moving from critical race consciousness to class consciousness. Wokeness has come to include working class folks across race and gender who are in struggle and conscious of our common humanity and our common enemy.

Critical race theorists and other critical scholars try performing exorcisms -- to disrupt racial hierarchies, to challenge white privilege, to destroy racism. But revolutionaries know that, in this case, to evict the spirit requires killing the body. For white supremacy to end, capitalism must die. To be woke means we have an awareness of exploitation, oppression, anti-blackness. We revolutionaries stand in true solidarity with Black experience as an expression of our unity as a multiracial and multigendered working class.

KNOWLEDGE, POWER AND REVOLUTION: TAKING POWER TO CREATE OUR FUTURE

The only way the ruling class can win and can maintain power is to put out the "big lie" through the media, education, and politics. Their attack on wokeness -- anti-wokeness -- is their cover. Control over knowledge production and dissemination through all forms and levels of education, media and communication, and culture is power. In their motion to consolidate fascist rule, ruling class forces try to kill truth. But truth cannot and will not be silenced because it informs our consciousness, study, hope and vision, and our rising revolutionary movement.

The baseline for successful revolutionary transformation is understanding the science and history of the world as it really is. These are the tools of the working class in our struggle to take power. There has been pushback, protest and vocal opposition -- in the streets, in the schools, on social media, and in the mainstream media -- from scholars, teachers and professors, parents and students, librarians and authors, journalists, and even some elected officials on what is being taught on every level of education, what books are in our libraries, what lies are being put out in the media and political spaces.

Revolutionary pedagogy and practice, although not always understood as such, has been at the heart of what folks are fighting for. The fascist offensive is denying the history and ongoing reality of pervasive white supremacy as their tool for division and control of material conditions, cultural narrative and education, politics and social institutions. We must reject the denial of history to unmask its falsification. We must embrace the reality of our collective American history and affirm our diverse experiences. Woke revolutionary comrades must rally to create a future that is both necessary and possible -- where we are all nurtured, safe, loved, free, and where we protect each other and the planet. ■

Ukraine war is really an attack on the working class

Continued from page 2

ing ruling class that is terrorizing one country after another, intensifying the danger of nuclear war and wreaking ecological devastation. Make every struggle for human needs and rights a struggle for peace.

Since the war began, the Biden administration and Congress have directed more than \$75 billion in assistance to Ukraine, which includes "humanitarian," financial and military support. At the same time, the United States is facing the lowest recruiting rates in recent history, with just 9% of Americans 17 to 24 years old who are eligible to serve being willing to serve. The appeal of military recruitment has been steady employment and good benefits. Today, nearly a quarter of active duty enlisted military personnel are experiencing food insecurity, according to the most current Department of Defense statistics.

There are still cities in the United States -- Flint, Baltimore, Jackson and others -- that do not have clean, safe water, while many more

are confronted with decaying basic infrastructure. The cost of a single day's operations at the Pentagon, \$1 billion, could fix most if not all of these problems.

People in America are increasingly becoming aware that there is no material benefit for them in war. Economic sanctions are essentially acts of war, preventing essential products like food or medicine from reaching the targeted population. Sanctions hurt more than the targeted population and there are more victims than the direct casualties of war. Those living in the United States also bear the cost. They have at least an instinctual understanding that what they're told about the conflict in Ukraine and what they see at home do not match up. Wars are waged for power and for control of a land's wealth and domination over people. The foundation for peace requires not just that the basic needs for survival are met, but that the right to live as full human beings in society is guaranteed. ■